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ABSTRACT

Collegiate middle-managers (deans and directors of support services) work in a complex setting that is part bureaucratic, part collegial, and part political. They are loyalists to begin with, and many strive to maintain allegiance to their institution. But the pressures and attractions of professional work, together with the general lack of regard for administrators by faculty, encourage middle managers to question their loyalty and commitment. They feel the calling of service to a mission, but they also feel inhibited by the strict hierarchical ranking of status levels on campus. Mobility is limited to a circumscribed arena. Few are tapped for higher status. Rewards are limited. Finally, loyalty becomes uncertain. (Author)

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Uncertain Loyalists: A Brief Look at Role Conflicts Among Collegiate Middle-Managers

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For several years, I have been studying the professional lives of middle-level collegiate administrators, the middle-managers of higher education. My research, supported by the Exxon Education Foundation, has included an extensive review of the literature, interviews with more than two-hundred middle-managers, and an intensive questionnaire survey of sixty-five of those interviewed (survey response of 72 percent). The major result to date of this work has been my ERIC monograph (Scott, 1978c).

I decided on the titles "lords, squires, and yeomen" as metaphors and conceptual aides for my study for several reasons. First, because these titles remind me of England, the source of many of our ideas about collegiate structure. Second, because they suggest a social system in which service to a "higher purpose" is an accepted aim (Halsey and Trow, 1971). And third, because they illuminate a hierarchical ranking of status levels in which there is mobility, but on either end of which is another level of rank--royalty on the one and "peasant" on the other.

Lords are nobles, political appointees of cabinet rank.

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Squires are the class under nobility, known as "landed gentry." They hold important administrative offices. The British yeomen are freeholding farmers, journey-men, and higher class attendants in the service of a nobleman or of royalty. As yeomen of the chamber or of the stables they were not simply assistants, but responsible for specific activities. They comprise "a stock from which about half the gentry [i.e. squires] originally sprang" (Perrott, 1968, p. 176).

For our purposes, Lords, Squires and Yeomen are middle-level collegiate administrators, the deans and directors of support services to whom their assistants and first-line, most often non-exempt, supervisors report and who themselves report to or are an officer at the vice-presidential level. Presidents and Provosts are royalty; non-exempt staff fall into the peasant tradition, i.e. those persons of lower social rank with little education and of modest financial means who are engaged in tasks generally requiring manual rather than mental skills, and whose authority for independent action is severely limited.

Some faculty friends, and secretaries, have objected to my use of this feudal model. They say it is self-defeating, at least self-fulfilling, and holds no hope for change. It is too class conscious, they say. These same friends, however, refer to collegiate administrators as <u>non</u>-academic, <u>non</u>-faculty, and even as <u>non</u>-professional. I argue that any group which is described in the negative, i.e. as <u>not</u> something

else, is subject to rigid class distinctions, and to think otherwise is naive.

Basically, middle-level administrative staffs fulfill three functions. They serve as liaison with external suppliers of resources, be they financial, material, or human; they implement procedures for internal allocation of resources and control of activities, especially in matters of campus coordination and compliance with external requirements; and they work with student activities and curricular responsibilities in helping students become oriented to college requirements, standards, and opportunities.

Such staffs have been found in colleges and universities for many years. In England, the precursors of today's Academic Registrars and Bursars were appointed during the middle-ages (Angus, 1973, p. 19). In the U.S., before the Civil War, most colleges employed a president, a treasurer, and a part-time librarian (in addition to the faculty) to exercise responsibility in needed areas. After the War, in response to enrollment increases and demands for new services, college administration began to grow and splinter. First a secretary of faculty was appointed, then a registrar, and

> then in succession a vice president, a dean, a dean of women, a chief business officer, an assistant dean, a dean of men, a director of admissions, and in time a corps of administrative assistants to the president who were in charge of anything and everything--[alumni

> and] public relations, church relations, civic relations, student relations, faculty relations (Rudolph, 1962, pp. 434-435.

After a while, these assistant-to positions became autonomous offices.

The number and type of administrative positions have increased in response to internal forces of growth and logic--and illogic--and to external demand. [The 1977 CUPA report on administration lists 52 administrative job categories (Van Alstyne, et al., 1977, p. 16)]. In recent years, these forces have caused the introduction, development, and greater use of positions such as ombudsmen, loan officers, sex counselors, affirmative action officers, women's counselors, pension managers, institutional research officers, salary classification specialists, veteran's counselors, government relations and sponsored program officers, and labor relations experts, to name but a few examples.

These middle-level collegiate administrators are the "anonymous leaders" which Lyman Glenny described six years ago (Glenny, 1972). In some sense, they are the unheralded heroes who in times of student demonstrations and faculty absence keep their institutions functioning. By the quality of service and information they provide, they also help determine institutional tone and style (Scott, 1978a). But they are virtually unknown to their faculty, trustees, and general public (Glenny, op. cit.; Scott 1975). However, they represent their institutions in important negotiations

with governmental agencies and other institutional "publics."

A particularly interesting problem suggested by this brief review of the condition of middle-managers is that of role. To continue by extension our metaphor of middle-managers as lords, squires, and yeomen, I wish to discuss the roles and relationships of collegiate middle-managers in terms of "loyalty." Loyalists, one may recall, were American colonists who pledged allegiance to the Crown of Britain during the War for Independence. They were on the forefront of social change--they were pioneers in a dramatic experiment--but they knew, and honored, their roots. In our example, collegiate administrators of the middle kind are simultaneously loyalists to an institutional identity--of which they express pride and to which they seem dedicated--and on the forefront of organizational changes which have serious consequences for their positions.

We have defined the functions of collegiate middle-managers in both abstract and, by illustration, specific terms (Scott, 1977b). The shaping of these functions--liaison with suppliers of resources, implementation of procedures for the allocation of resources and control of activities, and work with students--creates the norms which define the positions. One's role is defined by a set of norms.

Role, which is part of both the professional and the common language of literary criticism, philosophy, theatre,

and sociology, is among the most complex and most fundamental concepts of society. Gordon (1972) conceptualized role as

> a pattern of behavior and sentiment, organized in relation to presumed motivations, and frequently but not always connected to a specific organizational position.

We each enact several roles at once--dean, teacher, director, father, wife, citizen--and change roles during different life stages. At each stage we face different value-theme dilemmas, such as security versus challenge, increasing versus decreasing independence of action, stability versus accomplishment, dignity versus control, etc. It is these dilemmas, in the form of "incompatible expectations" or demands on our roles, which pose conflicts (Carroll, 1976).

Before we explore the conflicts in role that suggest the theme "uncertain loyalists," let us examine the relationships of collegiate middle-managers to others, because these relationships contribute to a sense of belonging, socialization to role, and levels of satisfaction. There are three dimensions of relationships I want to review: official interactions with others, informal interactions with others, and salaries as gross indicators of status relationships.

First, salaries. Each year, several agencies report average salaries for administrators by size, type, and control (i.e. public versus private) of institution. Other agencies report faculty salaries in a similar format. Still other sources report salaries for industry and government officials. Since each source may use different size samples

of varying representativeness, one cannot accept these comparisons as absolute. But they suggest directions of differences; as estimations they are useful.

According to a report of the National Center for Educations Statistics (Higher Education and National Affairs, August 5, 1977, p. 6), mean salaries for college administrators in 1976-77 were as follows:

Table I

Position	Mean Salary	No. of Officers in Sample
presidents and chancellors	$34,805	2362
chief academic officer	27,448	2211
chief business officer	24,696	2239
chief development officer	23,303	1294
chief student life officer	22,524	1871
director of computer center	20,790	1067
director of student counseling	18,965	1095
chief librarian	18,791	2192
director of admissions	18,723	1826
director of physical plant	17,853	1628
chief public relations officer	17,712	1163
registrar	16,516	1695
director of financial aid	11,956	1268
bookstore manager	11,956	1268

Salaries vary of course by size, type, and control of institutions, and by the age of position holders. 1977-78 salaries average 8.5 percent more (The Chronicle of Higher Education, May 15, 1978, p. 8, "Fact file").

If we assume that salaries of different officers are in relationship to each other and that salary levels of administrators in educational institutions are influenced by salary levels in business and government, it is interesting

to make some comparisons. The differences between salaries for financial aid officers, for example ($11,956) and those for Registrars ($16,516), public relations officers ($17,712) and admissions officers ($18,723) are dramatic. The problems of status for financial aid officers have been described elsewhere (Scott, 1978d).

Other comparisons can be equally striking. For example, company presidents average $111,000 a year in base salary and $40,000 more in incentives (Fowler, 1978), more than four times as much as college and university presidents earn. Middle-level corporate managers earn between $25,000 and $75,000, or between two and five times as much as middle-level collegiate adminstrators.

Bowen (1978, p. 38) has calculated comparisons of executive salaries in higher education and private business according to size and annual revenues of organization. His findings corroborate those just cited and add more detail. For example, he compares the average salary of chief business officers in higher education ($29,600 at a medium-sized institution) to the average salary of top financial executives in medium-sized businesses ($61,100); admissions directors to top marketing executives ($21,000 to $60,300); controllers to controllers ($20,900 to $39,400); and purchasing directors to purchasing executives ($16,100 to $35,500).

Federal Civil Service grades 1-18 cover beginning

clerks and senior administrators. Most entry level positions for someone with a bachelor's degree are GS-5 and pay $9,959. For a bachelor's degree with exceptional grades, the entering civil servant may be classified GS-7 and receive $12,336. With a master's degree, one qualifies for GS-9 and $15,090. A doctorate commands either a GS-11 at $18,258 or a GS-12 at $21,883.

As one example of federal civil service salaries, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education in DHEW, which among other responsibilities includes the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education and the National Center for Education Statistics, shows an average GS grade of 10.5 for its staff. The average GS salary paid is $24,094 (Appendix to the Budget). Of 3,700 positions in the Office of Education, 1,563, i.e. nearly one-half, are GS-12 or above earning at least $21,883 per year (ibid., p. 829).

Only in the very largest universities would salaries for administrators compare to this top range of government salaries. Bowen estimates that in higher education the top four central administrators averaged $30,800 in salary compared to the GS-18 average of $58,700 (op. cit.).

Perhaps the most reasonable comparison is between faculty and collegiate administrator salaries. For 1977, nine-month faculty compensation ranged as follows:

Table II

		Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor
AAUP Category I (University offering doctoral program)	80%ile	$31,310	$23,230	$18,970
	20%ile	24,830	19,770	16,240
AAUP Category II (Colleges offering more than bachelor's degrees)	80%ile	27,050	21,960	18,040
	20%ile	19,430	16,810	14,320
AAUP Category IIB (Colleges offering only a bachelor's degree)	80%ile	23,780	19,190	15,910
	20%ile	17,320	14,770	12,580

Salaries are good indicators of the value placed on positions. Clearly, many middle-level collegiate administrator positions are not valued highly in these terms, either by their institutions or by society.

But what about formal and informal relationships between positions and with others on campus? Middle-managers are evenly divided on the question of whether their professional roles have become more or less independent of others. However, they are overwhelmingly in agreement that the administrative organization of their institutions has become more complex (Scott, 1978d). Most also state that their office's responsibilities have become more greatly specialized (ibid; see also Vinson, 1977). However, while the degree of specialization has increased, many middle-managers now report to a lower level institutional officer than ten years ago. As demands on collegiate organizations have become more

complex, there has been both growth and differentiation of administrative positions, and a resulting reduction in status for many positions. Some which used to report to the president now report to a vice president or an associate provost (see Vinson, op. cit.; Whitmire, 1978).

Middle-managers have interchange on campus with other administrators, the executive staff of the president, faculty, students, and trustees. These relations may be formal or informal, one-to-one or in groups. The more frequently interchange takes place, the more likely it is to be informal. Many middle-managers have regular and substantial contacts with these others, except for trustees, although many do see trustees informally once a month (Scott, 1978e). However, the nature of these relationships makes the socialization of new administrators difficult. Role models and significant others are obscure, and may more often include national association colleagues or federal bureau representatives than campus supervisors. The literature on middle-managers, scant as it is, includes many references to the lack of consideration or respect shown (Baumgartel, 1976) and to the "step-sister" status (Thomas, 1978) accorded them by senior administrators and faculty. This condition, together with the fact that middle-managers have little involvement in either the central missions or the determination of goals of their institutions, places a strain on the degree of loyalty or organizational commitment shown by them.

Relations with faculty are particularly troubled. Faculty seem to regard the growing ranks of collegiate administrators as a "not-quite necessary evil." Some middle-managers have little appreciation for the role of faculty. In both cases, a primary cause for such feelings seems to be the lack of interaction, and consequent lack of understanding, between them. Another cause seems to be that the values and frames of reference of each group are so different. In their cumulative effect, these causes have resulted in a lack of mutual respect and regard for the "professionalism" of the other. [The literature on faculty-administration strains is voluminous. One of the best portrayals is also one of the oldest: Thorsten Veblen's The Higher Learning in America (1918)].

As has been discussed elsewhere (e.g., Caplow and McGee, 1958; Jencks and Riesman, 1968) faculty, especially younger ones and those at institutions with selective admission, are very often oriented more toward their academic disciplines than to the colleges or universities that pay their salaries. This frame of reference is really quite different from that of all but a few administrators.

It is true that administrative roles are reaching new levels of sophistication. For the most, however, middle-management positions do not require unique forms of advanced training: there is no "M.S. in purchasing for colleges and universities." Most training takes place on the job (Scott,

1977b). Nevertheless, middle-managers consider themselves professionals, and are encouraged in their thinking by national associations that sponsor meetings of people in similar jobs, codes of ethics, and the sharing of both basic, or fundamental, and specialized information necessary for effective performance. Brooks (1973) suggests that these are the conditions of a professional, because he is someone who is "an expert 'with specialized knowledge' . . . and who shares a corporate 'sense of organic unity and consciousness' with others of similar competence.'" Studies of particular middle-management positions emphasize these considerations and the importance of the posts (Campbell, 1978; Davis and Van Dusen, 1978; Russel and Galin, 1978; Stewart, 1978). Campbell's mission in his article is to "convince others that admissions is the veritable life blood of the institution."

However, the value of the middle-management role is not highly respected by faculty and senior staff of campus (Baldridge, et al., 1978; Baumgartel, 1976; Thomas, 1978). Even with the greater degree of specialization required in their jobs, they are not granted full membership in the academic community. [And they want it, not just "good schools for the kids" and football games (Thomas, 1978).] But the faculty is the defining element of the institution, and they determine the conditions for membership.

Now it is obvious that not all middle-managers feel the scorn of faculty. Many, especially academic deans' staff

and financial aid officers, have regular contact with both faculty and students. However, there are college administrators who have little or no direct contact with either, and whose primary contact is about contracts and other forms of "business" paperwork. These middle-level administrators differ from others on campus in two significant ways. Not only do they have virtually no involvement with teachers and learners in their primary roles, but also these administrators identify themselves as professionals comparable to persons doing similar work in both collegiate institutions and industry. Most traditional collegiate middle-manager positions have for frames of reference only similar collegiate positions, which originated in the academy. But the new, fast growing, positions in personnel and finance brought to campuses in response to federal requirements and the need for better financial management, have their origins in business and are being populated on campus by persons from industry. They identify not only with a specialized field, but also with an entirely different context and set of values. Financial aid principles, policies, and procedures are informed by the fact that financial aid is a unique collegiate function. The same cannot be said for personnel and financial responsibilities. I believe it is the increasing influence of these positions--with their different frames of reference and values--that places renewed strain on faculty-administrative relations.

Psychologists and sociologists describe the stages of life--oedipal period, later childhood, early adolescence, later adolescence, young adulthood, early maturity, full maturity, old-age--in terms of role. But in each stage, one can assume several roles at once: son or daughter, brother or sister, father or mother, professional, employee, employer, head of volunteer activity, etc. In each role, one can face conflicts because of the competing demands of his several roles. We learn how to adjust to these potential conflicts gradually, through the variety of learning experiences available to us as children and young adults, and this socialization limits the possibility of our being immobilized by such conflict: conflicts must be resolved in order for us to function. Resolution of conflicts is affected by how the individual resolves the value-theme dilemmas mentioned earlier.

For example, among collegiate middle-managers, the competing themes of security versus challenge, increasing versus decreasing independence of action, and stability versus accomplishment, influence the resolution of role conflicts introduced by both structural causes--the peculiar institutional organization that is part collegial, part political, and part bureaucratic--and situational causes, i.e. the particular style of the institution. One such conflict involves the lack of validation for the middle-manager's role. Considered experts off-campus they are often ignored on-campus. They bear specialized information which is

frequently not used by policy-makers (Scott, 1977a; 1978b). They express pride in their institutions, but do not feel appreciated by it (Thomas, 1978).

They also experience a lack of clarity in their role as administrators. Standards, expectations, directions are often confused, as their constituents send conflicting signals to them. Middle-managers are to be servants to students and faculty (to "hold their coats," according to Doris Grumbach, 1978), and instruments of institutional policy set by senior administrators and trustees. They are to be both servants (as support staff) and policemen (as monitors of procedures). Middle-managers are generally overworked and suffer from inadequate facilities and insufficient staff help (Thomas, op. cit., p. 18). They have, indeed, achieved only "grudging acceptance" (Perkins, 1973, p. 8).

Professional associations and job demands encourage the development of specialized knowledge and skills, but institutions do not reward it. However, while institutions do not offer sufficient rewards as reinforcement, national associations do (Scott, 1978c; 1978d). As a result, role models for professional behavior are often found off-campus, not on. This is an important concern because role models are the sources for learning how to behave in one's role, and can become masters in a sponsor-protege relationship. Without such relationships, and with little contact across "chains of command," institutional loyalty, so plentiful

when the middle-manager begins to work, becomes attenuated. Like other "professionals, middle-managers develop high professional loyalty at the expense of institutional loyalty" (Leavitt, 1978, p. 158). Their self-esteem and sense of mastery as professionalsare developed on-campus, but confirmed off-campus.

Role conflicts can result in "no-risk" actions and self-defeating behavior. When in formal relations with faculty the holders of highest status on campus, even the most expert of middle-managers can find himself in the position of "go for." Such relations can force administrators into a limited and caricatured, obsequious role, in which they are likely to be ineffectual, and stumble, which contributes to the lack of respect between faculty and administrators (Thomas, op. cit., p. 18). The assistant professor, for example, thinks the assistant dean is a powerful authority, while he or she thinks of the assistant professor as having more authority than himself. The result can be an awkward relationship, hardly what is needed for the accomplishment of common goals. But that is the rub. Unlike a corporation, which has profit as a superordinate goal, educational institutions have a variety of goals, with none universally acclaimed. One learns to tolerate ambiguity, or become ineffective. And the feeling of powerlessness tends to encourage middle-managers to become rules-minded and defensive about their domain. This reaction, of course, is not unique to higher education (Kanter, 1978).

Some role conflict among middle-managers appears to be sought, even if unwittingly. Each role one assumes has a set of obligatory norms for behavior (Popitz, 1972, p. 16). When the administrator becomes a student in the graduate program at the institution in which he works, which I do not mean to discourage, he invites role conflict. If he had been an undergraduate at the same institution, the situation becomes even more complex. The student role has different obligations than the administrator role. The sources of authority differ as do the relationships to faculty. Many middle-managers are in this situation.

In some institutions, usually small residential colleges, directors of financial aid and deans of students among others, also teach. These relationships, too, can result in conflicts over authority and role.

Conflicts in occupational roles--e.g. when one is charged both to serve and to control--can undermine administrative effectiveness and encourage the transfer of energy from one's institution to other agencies. Weak salaries and a decline in status, at a time when specialized demands are increasing, are serious agents of conflict. They affect one's feelings of identity as a professional, commitment to one's work, and loyalty to one's organization / The total effects of such dysfunction are difficult to determine, but it seems certain that without loyalty to institutional aspirations, administrators will be less than fully effective when conflicts in occupational role and loyalty exist. (Bucher and Stelling,1977).

And so we come full cycle. Middle managers work in a complex setting that is part bureaucratic, part collegial, and part political (Baldridge, et al., 1978). They are "loyalists" to begin with, and many strive to maintain allegiance to their institution. But the pressures and attractions of professional work, together with the general lack of regard for administrators by faculty, encourage middle managers to question their loyalty and commitment. Like lords, squires, and yeomen, they feel the calling of service to a mission, but they also feel inhibited by the strict hierarchical ranking of status levels on campus. Mobility is limited to a circumscribed arena. Few are tapped for higher status. Rewards are limited. Finally, loyalty becomes uncertain.

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